

Below are exact extracts from the Registers of the Stationers Company copied as they stand in Arlens Edition. From them it appears that both Consonby & Olney entered Sidneys Book, but that Consonby's was the earlier Entry. It is most probable that P. applied to the Comp. before printing, as was often done, & that O's application was made in ignorance of P's. Supposing O's Edition to have been already printed this might account for the rarity of P's Edition because if, as seems probable from the Stationers Company entry O's copies were transferred to P. P. would not find it necessary to issue only a very small number of copies. This theory too accounts for the existence of made-up copies like the one printed by Mayhew or the accompanying cutting these being clearly copies of O's Edition with P's title page substituted for O's. The Arcadia (1598) which contains the defence & also the 1<sup>st</sup> Edn of The Arcadia (1590) were both published by P. The Authorities at the Library of the B. Museum say they have never seen or heard of a copy of the Defence resembling this. it is quite unknown

Stationers Company's Register

29 November [1594]

William  
Consonby.

Entered for his copie under the handes of the  
Wardens a booke intituled A treatise in  
commendacion of Pastore or the Defence of  
Poesy written by Sir Phillip Sidney.



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21<sup>st</sup> die Aprilis (1595)

Hughes  
Olney

Printed for his copie under the handes of the Wardens  
a booke intituled An Apologie for Poetrie.

This belongeth to Master Consonby by a former sub Licence and an agreement  
is made between them whereby Master Consonby is to enjoy the copie  
according to the former sub Licence.  
(The cancelling of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Entry is so in the original.)





Poetic

Sir Philip




London

THE  
OFFICE OF  
THE  
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY  
KNIGHT



LONDON  
Printed by W. B. [illegible]  
1792



# The defence of Poesie, by

*Sir Philip Sidney Knight.*



When the right vertuous *E.VV.* and I, were at the Emperours Court together, wee gaue our selues to learne horsemanship of *Ion Pietro Pugliano*, one that with great commendation had the place of an Esquire in his stable: and hee according to the fertillnes of the Italian wit, did not onely affoord vs the demonstration of his practise, but sought to enrich our mindes with the contemplations therein, which he thought most precious. But with none I remember mine eares were at any time more loaden, then when (either angred with slow paiment, or mooued with our learnerlike admiration) hee exercised his speech in the praise of his facultie. He said souldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of souldiers. He said they were the maisters of warre, and ornaments of peace, speedie goers, and strong abiders, triumphers both in Camps and Courts: nay to so vnbleeued a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a Prince, as to be a good horseman. Skill of government was but a *Pedanteria*, in



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comparison, then would he adde certaine praises by telling what a peerlesse beast the horse was, the onely seruiceable Courtier without flattery, the beast of most bewtie, faithfulnessse, courage, and such more, that if I had not bene a peece of a *Logician* before I came to him, I thinke he would haue perswaded me to haue wished my selfe a horse. But thus much at least, with his no few words he draue into me, that selfeloue is better then any guilding, to make that seem gorgious wherin our selues be parties. Wherin if *Pulianos* strong affection and weake arguments will not satisfie you, I wil giue you a nearer example of my selfe, who I know not by what mischance in these my not old yeares and idlest times, hauing slipped into the title of a *Poet*, am prouoked to say something vnto you in the defence of that my vnelected vocation, which if I handle with more good will, then good reasons, beare with me, since the scholler is to be pardoned that followeth the steps of his maister. And yet I must say, that as I haue more iust cause to make a pittifull defence of poore *Poetrie*, which from almost the highest estimation of learning, is falne to be the laughing stocke of children, so haue I need to bring some more auailable proofes, since the former is by no man bard of his deserued credit, the silly later, hath had euen the names of *Philosophers* vsed to the defacing of it, with great daunger of ciuill warre among the *Muses*. And first truly to all them that professing learning enuey against *Poetrie*, may iustly be obiected, that they go very neare to vngratefulnesse, to seeke to deface that which in the noblest nations and languages that are knowne,  
hath

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hath bene the first light giuer to ignorance, and first nurse whose milke litle & litle enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges. And will you play the Hedge-hogge, that being receiued into the den, draue out his host? Or rather the Vipers, that with their birth kill their parents? Let learned *Greece* in any of his manifold Sciences, be able to shew me one booke before *Musæus*, *Homer*, & *Hesiod*, all three nothing else but Poets. Nay let any Historie bee brought, that can say any writers were there before them, if they were not men of the same skill, as *Orpheus*, *Linus*, and some other are named, who hauing bene the first of that country that made penne deliverers of their knowledge to the posteritie, nay iustly challenge to bee called their Fathers in learning. For not onely in time they had this prioritie, (although in it selfe antiquitie be venerable) but went before them, as causes to draw with their charming sweetnesse the wild vntamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. So as *Amphion*, was said to moue stones with his Poetry, to build *Thebes*, and *Orpheus* to be listned to by beasts, indeed stonie and beastly people. So among the *Romans*, were *Liuius*, *Andronicus*, and *Ennius*, so in the Italian language, the first that made it aspire to be a treasure-house of Science, were the Poets *Dante*, *Bocace*, and *Petrarch*. So in our English, wer *Gower*, and *Chawcer*, after whom, encouraged & delighted with their excellent foregoing, others haue folowed to bewtify our mother toong, as wel in the same kind as other arts. This did so notably shew it self, y<sup>e</sup> the *Philosophers* of *Greece* durst not a lōg time appear to y<sup>e</sup> world, but vnder y<sup>e</sup> mask of poets.

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So *Thales*, *Empedocles*, and *Parmenides*, sang their naturall Philosophie in verses. So did *Pithagoras* and *Phocillides*, their morall Councels. So did *Tirteus* in warre matters, and *Solon* in matters of pollicie, or rather they being Poets, did exercise their delightfull vaine in those points of highest knowledge, which before them laie hidden to the world. For, that wise *Solon* was directly a Poet, it is manifest, hauing written in verse the notable Fable of the *Atlantick* Island, which was continued by *Plato*. And truly euen *Plato* who so euer well considereth, shall finde that in the body of his worke though the inside & strength were Philosophie, the skin as it were and beautie, depended most of Poetrie. For all stands vpon Dialogues, wherein hee faines many honest Burgessees of *Athens* speak of such matters, that if they had bene set on the Racke, they would neuer haue confessed them: besides his Poeticall describing the circumstances of their meetings, as the well ordering of a banquet, the delicacie of a walke, with enterlacing meere Tales, as *Gyges Ring* and others, which, who knowes not to bee flowers of Poetrie, did neuer walke into *Appollos* Garden. And euen *Historiographers*, although their lippes sound of things done, and veritie be written in their foreheads, haue bene glad to borrow both fashion and perchance weight of the Poets. So *Herodotus* entituled his Historie, by the name of the nine Muses, and both he and all the rest that followed him, either stole, or vsurped of Poetrie, their passionate describing of passions, the many particularities of battels which no man could affirme, or if that be denied me, long Orations put  
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in the mouthes of great Kings and Captains, which it is certaine they neuer pronounced. So that truly neither *Philosopher*, nor *Historiographer*, could at the first haue entered into the gates of populer iudgements, if they had not taken a great passport of Poetrie, which in all nations at this day where learning flourisheth not, is plaine to be seene: in all which, they haue some feeling of Poetry. In *Turkey*, besides their lawgiuing Diuines, they haue no other writers but Poets. In our neighbour Countrey *Ireland*, where truly learning goes verie bare, yet are their Poets held in a deuout reuerence. Euen among the most barbarous and simple *Indians*, where no writing is, yet haue they their Poets who make & sing songs which they call *Arentos*, both of their Auncestors deeds, and praises of their Gods. A sufficient probability, that if euer learning come among them, it must be by hauing their hard dull wittes softened and sharpened with the sweete delights of Poetrie, for vntill they finde a pleasure in the exercise of the minde, great promises of much knowledge, wil little perswade them that know not the frutes of knowledge. In *Wales*, the true remnant of the auncient *Brittons*, as there are good authorities to shew, the long time they had Poets which they called *Bardes*: so thorow all the cōquests of *Romans*, *Saxons*, *Danes*, and *Normans*, some of whom, did seeke to ruine all memory of learning from among them, yet do their Poets enen to this day last: so as it is not more notable in the soone beginning, then in long continuing. But since the Authors of most of our Sciences, were the *Romanes*, and before them the *Greekes*, let vs

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a litle stand vpon their authorities, but euen so farre as to see what names they haue giue vnto this now scorned skill. Among the *Romanes* a Poet was called *Vates*, which is as much as a diuiner, foreseer, or Prophet, as by his conioyned words *Vaticinium*, and *Vaticinari*, is manifest, so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestowe vpon this hart-rauishing knowledge, and so farre were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chanceable hitting vpon any of such verses, great foretokens of their following fortunes, were placed. Whereupon grew the word of *Sortes Vergiliane*, when by suddaine opening *Virgils* booke, they lighted vpon some verse of his, as it is reported by many, whereof the Histories of the *Emperours* liues are full. As of *Albinus* the Governour of our Iland, who in his childhood met with this verse *Arma amens capio, nec sat rationis in armis*: and in his age performed it, although it were a verie vaine and godlesse superstition, as also it was, to thinke spirits were commaunded by such verses, whereupon this word *Charmes* deriued of *Carmina*, commeth: so yet serueth it to shew the great reuerence those wittes were held in, and altogether not without ground, since both by the Oracles of *Delphos* and *Sybillas* prophesies, were wholly deliuered in verses, for that same exquisite obseruing of number and measure in the words, and that high flying libertie of conceit proper to the Poet, did seeme to haue some diuine force in it. And may not I presume a litle farther, to shewe the reasonablenesse of this word *Vatis*, and say that the  
holy

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holy *Dauids* Psalms are a diuine *Poeme*? If I do, I shal not do it without the testimony of great learned mē both auncient and moderne. But euen the name of Psalmes wil speak for me, which being interpreted, is nothing but Songs: then that it is fully written in meeter as all learned *Hebritians* agree, although the rules be not yet fully found. Lastly and principally, his handling his prophecie, which is meerly Poeticall. For what else is the awaking his musical Instruments, the often and free chaunging of persons, his notable *Prosopopeias*, whē he maketh you as it were see God comming in his maiestie, his telling of the beasts ioyfulness, and hils leaping, but a heavenly poeie, wherein almost he sheweth himselfe a passionate louer of that vnspeakable and euerlasting bewtie, to be seene by the eyes of the mind, onely cleared by faith? But truly now hauing named him, I feare I seeme to prophane that holy name, applying it to *Poetry*, which is among vs throwne downe to so ridiculous an estimation. But they that with quiet iudgements wil looke a litle deeper into it, shal find the end & working of it such, as being rightly applied, deserveth not to be scourged out of the Church of God. But now let vs see how the Greekes haue named it, and how they deemed of it. The Greekes named him *ποιητης*, which name, hath as the most excellent, gone through other languages, it commeth of this word *ποιω* which is to make: wherein I know not whether by luck or wisdom, we Englishmen haue met with the Greekes in calling him a Maker. Which name, how high and incomparable a title it is, I had rather were knowne by marking the scope of



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of other sciences, thē by any partial allegatiō. There is no Art deliuered vnto mankind that hath not the workes of nature for his principall obiect, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become Actōrs & Plaiers, as it were of what nature will haue set forth. So doth the *Astronomer* looke vpon the starres, and by that he seeth set downe what order nature hath taken therein. So doth the *Geometritian* & *Arithmititian*, in their diuers sorts of quantities. So doth the *Musitians* intimes tel you, which by nature agree, which not. The natural *Philosopher* thereon hath his name, and the (moral *Philosopher* standeth vppon the naturall vertues, vices, or passions of man: and follow nature saith he therein, and thou shalt not erre. The *Lawier* saith, what men haue determined. The *Historian*, what men haue done. The *Gramarian*, speaketh onely of the rules of speech, and the *Rhetoritian* and *Logitian*, considering what in nature wil soonest prooue, and perswade thereon, giue artificiall rules, which still are compassed within the circle of a question, according to the proposed matter. The *Physitian* wayeth the nature of mans bodie, & the nature of things helpfull, or hurtfull vnto it. And the *Metaphisicke* though it be in the second & abstract Notions, and therefore be counted supernaturall, yet doth hee indeed build vpon the depth of nature. Only the *Poet* disdeining to be tied to any such subiectiō, lifted vp with the vigor of his own inuention, doth grow in effect into an other nature: in making things either better then nature bringeth foorth, or quite a new, formes such as neuer were in nature: as the *Heroes*,

*Demi-*

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*Demigods, Cyclops, Chymeras, Furies*, and such like; so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely raunging within the Zodiack of his owne wit. Nature neuer set forth the earth in so rich Tapistry as diuerse Poets haue done, neither with so pleasaunt riuers, fruitfull trees, sweete smelling flowers, nor whatsoeuer els may make the too much loued earth more louely: her world is brasen, the Poets only deliuer a golden. But let those things alone and goe to man, for whom as the other things are, so it seemeth in him her vttermost comming is imploied: & know whether she haue brought forth so true a louer as *Theagenes*, so constant a friend as *Pylades*, so valiant a man as *Orlando*, so right a Prince as *Xenophons Cyrus*, so excellent a man euery way as *Virgils Aeneas*. Neither let this be iestingly cōceiued, bicause the works of the one be essenciall, the other in imitation or fiction: for euerie vnderstanding, knoweth the skill of ech Artificer standeth in that *Idea*, or fore conceit of the worke, and not in the worke it selfe. And that the Poet hath that *Idea*, is manifest, by deliivering them forth in such excellencie as he had imagined them: which deliivering forth, also is not wholly imaginative, as we are wont to say by thē that build Castles in the aire: but so farre substancially it worketh, not onely to make a *Cyrus*, which had bene but a particular excellency as nature might haue done, but to bestow a *Cyrus* vpon the world to make many *Cyrusses*, if they will learne aright, why and how that maker made him. Neither let it be deemed too sawcy a comparison, to ballance the highest point of

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mans wit, with the efficacie of nature: but rather  
giue right honor to the heavenly maker of that ma-  
ker, who hauing made man to his owne likenes, set  
him beyond and ouer all the workes of that second  
nature, which in nothing be sheweth so much as in  
Poetry; when with the force of a diuine breath, he  
bringeth things foorth surpassing her doings: with  
no small arguments to the incredulous of that first  
accursed fall of *Adam*, since our created wit maketh  
vs know what perfectiō is, and yet our infected wil  
keepeth vs frō reaching vnto it. But these argumēt  
will by few be vnderstood, and by fewer graunted:  
thus much I hope wil be giuen me, that the Greeks  
with some probability of reason, gane him the name  
about all names of learning. Now let vs goe to a  
more ordinarie opening of him, that the truth may  
be the more palpable: and so I hope though we get  
not so vnmatched a praise as the *Etimologie* of his  
names will graunt, yet his verie description which  
no man will denie, shall not iustly be barred from  
a principall commendation. *Poesie* therefore, is an  
Art of *Imitation*: for so *Aristotle* termeth it in the  
word *μimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfei-  
ting, or figuring forth to speake Metaphorically. A  
speaking *Picture*, with this end to teach and delight.  
Of this haue bene three generall kindes, the chiefe  
both in antiquitie and excellencie, were they that  
did imitate the vncōceiueable excellencies of God.  
Such were *Dauid* in his *Psalmes*, *Salomon* in his song  
of songs, in his *Ecclesiastes* and *Proverbs*. *Moses*  
and *Debra*, in their Hymnes, and the wryter of  
*Iobe*: Which beside other, the learned *Emannell*,  
*Tremelius*,



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*Tremelius*, and *F. Iunius*, doo entitle the Poeticall part of the scripture: against these none will speake that hath the holie Ghost in due holie reuerence. In this kinde, though in a full wrong diuinitie, were *Orpheus*, *Amphion*, *Homer* in his himnes, and manie other both *Greeke* and *Romanes*. And this *Poesie* must be vsed by whosoever will follow *S. Pauls* counsaile, in singing *Psalmes* when they are mery, and I knowe is vsed with the fruite of comfort by some, when in sorrowfull panges of their death bringing sinnes, they finde the consolation of the neuer leauing goodnes. The second kinde, is of them that deale with matters Philosophicall, either morall as *Tirteus*, *Phocilides*, *Cato*; or naturall, as *Lucretius*, and *Virgils Georgikes*; or Astronomicall as *Manilius* and *Pontanus*; or Historicall as *Lucan*: which who misliketh the fault, is in their iudgement quite out of tast, & not in the sweet food of sweetly vttered knowledge. But bicause this second sort is wrapped within the folde of the proposed subiect, and takes not the free course of his own inuention, whether they properly bee Poets or no, let *Gramarians* dispute; and goe to the third indeed right Poets, of whom chiefly this question ariseth: betwixt whom and these second, is such a kinde of difference, as betwixt the meaner sort of Painters, who counterfeyt onely such faces as are set before them, and the more excelent, who hauing no law but wit, bestow that in colours vpon you, which is fittest for the eye to see, as the constant, though lamenting looke of *Lucretia*, when shee punished in her selfe anothers fault: wherein hee painteth not

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*Laetitia* whom he neuer saw, but painteth the outward bewty of such a vertue. For these third be they which most properly do imitate to teach & delight: and to imitate, borrow nothing of what is, hath bin, or shall be, but range onely reined with learned discretion, into the diuine consideration of what may be and should be. These be they that as the first and most noble sort, may iustly be termed *Vates*: so these are waited on in the excellentest languages and best vnderstandings, with the fore described name of *Poets*. For these indeed do meerly make to imitate, and imitate both to delight & teach, and delight to moue men to take that goodnesse in hand, which without delight they would flie as from a stranger; and teach to make them know that goodnesse wherunto they are moued: which being the noblest scope to which euer any learning was directed, yet want there not idle tongues to barke at them. These be subdiuided into sundry more speciall denominations. The most notable be the *Heroick*, *Lyrick*, *Tragick*, *Comick*, *Satyrick*, *Iambick*, *Elegiack*, *Pastorall*, and certaine others: some of these being tearmed according to the matter they deale with, some by the sort of verse they liked best to write in, for indeed the greatest part of Poets, haue apparelled their poetick inuentions, in that numbrous kind of writing which is called *vers*. Indeed but apparelled verse: being but an ornament and no cause to Poetrie, since there haue bene many most excellent Poets that neuer versified, and now swarme many versifiers that need neuer answer to the name of Poets. For *Xenophon* who did imitate so excellently as to giue vs *effigiem iusti imperii*, the pour-

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pourtraiture of a iust Empyre vnder the name of *Cyrus*, as *Cicero* saith of him, made therein an absolute heroicall Poeme. So did *Heliodorus*, in his sugred inuention of that picture of loue in *Theagenes & Chariclea*, and yet both these wrote in prose, which I speake to shew, that it is not ryming and versing that maketh a Poet, (no more then a long gown maketh an Aduocate, who though he pleaded in Armour, should be an Aduocat and no souldier) but it is that faining notable images of vertues, vices, or what els, with that delightfull teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a Poet by. Although indeed the Senate of Poets hath chosen verse as their fittest raiment: meaning as in matter, they passed all in all, so in maner, to go beyond them: not speaking table talke fashion, or like men in a dreame, words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but peasing each sillable of eache word by iust proportion, according to the dignitie of the subiect. Now therefore it shal not be amisse, first to way this latter sort of poetrie by his workes, and then by his parts, and if in neither of these Anatomies hee be condemnable, I hope we shall obtaine a more fauourable sentence. This purifying of wit, this enriching of memorie, enabling of iudgement, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we cal learning, vnder what name so euer it come forth, or to what immediate end soeuer it be directed, the finall end is, to lead and draw vs to as high a perfection, as our degenerate soules made worse by their clay-lodgings, can be capable of. This according to the inclination of man, bred many formed impressions. For some that thought



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this felicity principally to be gotten by knowledge, and no knowledge to be so high or heauenly, as acquaintance with the stars; gaue theselues to *Astronomie*: others perswading theselues to be *Demygods*, if they knew the causes of things, became naturall and supernaturall *Philosophers*. Some an admirable delight drew to *Musicke*; and some the certaintie of demonstration to the *Mathematicks*; but all one and other hauing this scope to know, & by knowledge to lift vp the minde from the dungeon of the bodie, to the enioying his owne diuine essence. But when by the ballance of experience it was found, that the *Astronomer* looking to the stars might fall in a ditch, that the inquiring *Philosopher* might be blind in himself, & the *Mathematician*, might draw forth a straight line with a crooked hart. Then lo did prooue, the ouerruler of opinions make manifest, that all these are but seruing sciences; which as they haue a priuate end in themselves, so yet are they all directed to the highest end of the mistresse knowledge by the *Greeks* *αρετικη*, which stands as I thinke, in the knowledge of a mans selfe, in the Ethike and Politique consideration, with the end of well doing, and not of well knowing onely. Euen as the Sadlers next ende is to make a good Saddle, but his further ende, to serue a nobler facultie, which is horsemanship, so the horse-mans to souldiery: and the souldier not only to haue the skill, but to performe the practise of a souldier. So that the ending end of all earthly learning, being verteous action, those skils that most serue to bring forth that, haue a most iust title to be Princes ouer all the rest: wherein if we cā shew, the Poet is worthy to haue

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haue it before any other competitors: among who principally to challenge it, step forth the moral *Philosophers*, whom me thinkes I see comming towards me, with a sullain grauitie, as though they could not abide vice by day-light, rudely cloathed, for to witnesse outwardly their contempt of outward things, with bookes in their hands against glorie, whereto they set their names: sophistically speaking against subtiltie, and angry with any man in whom they see the foule fault of anger. These men casting larges as they go of definitions, diuitions, and distinctions, with a scornful interrogatiue, do soberly aske, whether it be possible to find any path so ready to lead a man to vertue, as that which teacheth what vertue is, & teacheth it not only by deliuering forth his very being, his causes and effects, but also by making knowne his enimie vice, which must be destroyed, and his comber some seruant passion, which must be mastred: by shewing the generalities that contains it, and the specialities that are deriued from it. Lastly by plaine setting downe, how it extends it selfe out of the limits of a mans owne little world, to the gouernment of families, and mainteining of publike societies. The *Historian* scarcely giues leisure to the *Moralist* to say so much, but that he loaden with old Moule-eaten Records, authorising himselfe for the most part vpon other Histories, whose greatest authorities are built vpon the notable foundation *Here say*, hauing much ado to accord differing writers, & to pick truth out of partiality: better acquainted with a 1000. yeres ago, then with the present age, and yet better knowing how this world goes, then  
how

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how his owne wit runnes, curious for Antiquities, and inquisitiue of Nouelties, a wonder to yoong folkes, and a Tyrant in table talke; denieth in a great chafe, that any man for teaching of vertue, and vertues actions, is comparable to him. I am *Testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoria, magistra vite, nuncia vetustatis*. The *Philosopher* saith he, teacheth a disputatiue vertue, but I do an actiue. His vertue is excellent in the dangerlesse *Academy of Plato*: but mine sheweth forth her honourable face in the battailes of *Marathon, Pharsalia, Poitiers, and Agincourt*. Hee teacheth vertue by certaine abstract considerations: but I onely bid you follow the footing of them that haue gone before you. Old aged experience, goeth beyond the fine witted *Philosopher*: but I giue the experience of many ages. Lastly, if he make the song Booke, I put the learners hand to the Lute, and if he be the guide, I am the light. Then would he alleage you innumerable examples, confirming storie by stories, how much the wisest Senators and Princes, haue bene directed by the credit of Historie, as *Bru-tus, Alphonfus of Aragon*, (and who not if need be.) At length, the long line of their disputation makes a point in this, that the one giueth the precept, & the other the example. Now whom shall we find, since the question standeth for the highest forme in the schoole of learning to be moderator? Truly as mee seemeth, the Poet, and if not a moderator, euen the man that ought to carry the title from them both: & much more from all other seruing sciences. Therefore compare we the *Poet* with the *Historian*, & with the morall *Philosopher*: and if hee goe beyond them both,



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both, no other humaine skill can match him. For as for the diuine, with all reuerence it is euer to be excepted, not onely for hauing his scope as far beyond any of these, as Eternitie exceedeth a moment: but euen for passing ech of these in themselves. And for the *Lawier*, though *Ius* be the daughter of *Iustice*, the chiefe of vertues, yet because he seeks to make men good, rather *formidine pana*, then *virtutis amore*; or to say righter, doth not endeuor to make men good, but that their euill hurt not others, hauing no care so he be a good citizen, how bad a man he be. Therefore as our wickednes maketh him necessarie, and necessitie maketh him honorable, so is he not in the deepest truth to stand in ranck with these, who al endeuour to take naughtinesse away, and plant goodnesse euen in the secretest cabinet of our soules: and these foure are all that any way deale in the consideration of mens manners, which being the supreme knowledge, they that best breed it, deserue the best commendation. The *Philosopher* therefore, and the *Historian*, are they which would win the goale, the one by precept, the other by example: but both, not hauing both, doo both halt. For the *Philosopher* setting downe with thornie arguments, the bare rule, is so hard of vtterance, and so mistie to be conceiued, that one that hath no other guide but him, shall wade in him till he be old, before he shall finde sufficient cause to be honest. For his knowledge standeth so vpon the abstract and generall, that happie is that man who may vnderstand him, and more happie, that can apply what he doth vnderstand. On the other side, the *Historian* wanting the precept, is so

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ted, not to what should be, but to what is, to the particular truth of things, and not to the general reason of things, that his example draweth no necessarie consequence, and therefore a lesse fruitfull doctrine. Now doth the peertesse Poet performe both, for whatsoener the *Philosopher* saith should be done, he giues a perfect picture of it by some one, by who he presupposeth it was done, so as he coupleth the generall notion with the particuler example. A perfect picture I say, for hee yeeldeth to the powers of the minde an image of that whereof the *Philosopher* bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pearce, nor possesse, the sight of the soule so much, as that other doth. For as in outward things to a man that had neuer seene an *Elephant*, or a *Rinoceros*, who should tell him most exquisitely all their shape, cullour, bignesse, and particuler marks, or of a gorgious pallace an *Architelture*, who declaring the full bewries, might well make the hearer able to repeat as it were by roat all he had heard, yet should neuer satisfie his inward conceit, with being witnesse to it selfe of a true lively knowledge: but the same mā, as soon as he might see those beasts wel painted, or that house wel in modell, should straightwaies grow without need of any description to a iudicial comprehending of them, so no doubt the *Philosopher* with his learned definitions, be it of vertues or vices, matters of publike policy or priuat gouernment, replenissheth the memorie with many infallible grounds of wisdom, which notwithstanding lie darke before the imaginatiue and iudging power, if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking

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king picture of *Poesie*. *Tully* taketh much paines, and many times not without Poeticall helpes to make vs know the force, loue of our country hath in vs. Let vs but heare old *Anchises*, speaking in the middest of *Troies* flames, or see *Vlisses* in the fulnesse of all *Calipsoes* delights, bewaile his absence from barraine and beggerly *Itheca*. Anger the *Stoickes* said, was a short madnesse: let but *Sophocles* bring you *Ajax* on a stage, killing or whipping sheepe and oxen, thinking them the Army of Greekes, with their Chief-taines *Agamemnon*, and *Menelaus*: and tell me if you haue not a more familiar insight into Anger, then finding in the schoolemen his *Genus* and *Difference*. See whether wisdom and temperance in *Vlisses* and *Diomedes*, valure in *Achilles*, friendship in *Nisus* and *Eurialus*, euen to an ignorant man carry not an apparant shining: and contrarily, the remorse of conscience in *Oedipus*; the soone repenting pride in *Agamemnon*; the selfe deuouring crueltie in his father *Atrous*; the violence of ambition in the two *Theban* brothers; the sower sweetnesse of reuenge in *Medea*; and to fall lower, the *Terentian* *Gnato*, and our *Chawcers* *Pander* so exprest, that we now vse their names, to signifieth their Trades: And finally, all vertues, vices, and passions, so in their owne naturall states, laide to the view, that we seeme not to heare of them, but clearly to see through them. But euen in the most excellent determination of goodnesse, what *Philosophers* counsaile can so readely direct a Prince, as the feined *Cirus* in *Xenophon*, or a vertuous man in all fortunes: as *Aeneas* in *Virgill*, or a whole Common-wealth, as the Way



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of Sir Thomas Moores *Eutopia*. I say the Way, because where Sir Thomas Moore erred, it was the fault of the man and not of the Poet : for that Way of patterning a Common-wealth, was most absolute though hee perchaunce hath not so absolutely performed it. For the question is, whether the fained Image of Poetrie, or the regular instruction of Philosophie, hath the more force in teaching? Wherein if the *Philosophers* haue more rightly shewed themselues *Philosophers* then the *Poets*, haue attained to the high toppe of their profession (as in truth *Mediocribus esse poetis non Dii, non homines, non concessere columna,* ) it is (I say againe) not the fault of the Art, but that by fewe men that Art can be accomplished. Certainly euen our Sauour Christ could as well haue giuen the morall common places of vncharitablenesse and humblenesse, as the diuine narration of *Diuēs* and *Lazarus*, or of disobedience and mercy, as that heavenly discourse of the lost childe and the gracious Father, but that his through searching wisdom, knew the estate of *Diuēs* burning in hell, and of *Lazarus* in *Abrahams* bosome, would more constantly as it were, inhabit both the memorie and iudgement. Truly for my selfe (mee seemes) I see before mine eyes, the lost childes disdainful prodigalitie, turned to enuy a Swines dinner: which by the learned *Diuines* are thought not Historical acts, but instructing Parables. For conclusion, I say the *Philosopher* teacheth, but he teacheth obscurely, so as the learned onely can vnderstand him, that is to say, he teacheth them that are already taught. But the Poet is the food for the tendrest stomachs, the Poet  
is

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is indeed, the right populer *Philosopher*. Whereof  
*Esops* Tales giue good prooffe, whose prettie Alle-  
gories stealing vnder the formall Tales of beastes,  
makes many more beastly then beasts: begin to hear  
the sound of vertue from those dumbe speakers. But  
now may it be alledged, that if this imagining of  
matters be so fit for the imagination, then must the  
*Historian* needs surpasse, who brings you images of  
true matters, such as indeed were done, and not such  
as fantastically or falsly may be suggested to haue bin  
done. Truly *Aristotle* himselfe in his discourse of *Poe-  
sie*, plainly determineth this questiō, saying, that *Poe-  
trie* is φιλοσοφητικόν, and ἀλλοδαμικόν, that is to say, it is more  
Philosophicall and more then History. His reason is,  
because *Poesie* dealeth with καθόλου, that is to say, with  
the vniuersall consideration, and the Historie with  
καθ' ἑκαστον, the particular. Now saith he, the vniuersall  
wayes what is fit to be said or done, either in likeli-  
hood or necessitie, which the *Poesie* considereth in  
his imposed names: and the particular onely mar-  
keth whether *Alcibiades* did or suffered this or that.  
Thus farre *Aristotle*. Which reason of his, as all his  
is most full of reason. For indeed if the questiō were,  
whether it were better to haue a particular act truly  
or falsly set downe, there is no doubt which is to be  
chosen, no more then whether you had rather haue  
*Vespacians* Picture right as he was, or at the Painters  
pleasure nothing resembling. But if the question be  
for your owne vse and learning, whether it be bet-  
ter to haue it set downe as it should be, or as it was;  
then certainly is more doctrinable, the fained *Cyrus*  
in *Xenophon*, then the true *Cyrus* in *Iustin*: and the

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fained *Aeneas* in *Virgill*, then the right *Aeneas* in *Dares Phrygius*: as to a Ladie that desired to fashion her countenance to the best grace: a *Painter* should more benefite her to pourtrait a most sweete face, writing *Canidia* vppon it, then to paint *Canidia* as shee was, who *Horace* sweareth was full ill fauoured. If the *Poet* do his part aright, he wil shew you in *Tantalus*, *Atrius*, and such like, nothing that is not to be shunned; in *Cyrus*, *Aeneas*, *Vlisses*, each thing to be followed: where the *Historian* bound to tell things as things were, cannot be liberall, without hee will be Poeticall of a perfect patterne, but as in *Alexander* or *Scipio* himselfe, shew doings, some to be liked, some to be misliked; and then how wil you discern what to follow, but by your own discretio which you had without reading *Q. Curtius*. And whereas a man may say, though in vniuersall consideration of doctrine, the *Poet* preuaileth, yet that the *Historie* in his saying such a thing was done, doth warrant a man more in that he shall follow. The answer is manifest, that if he stand vpon that was, as if he should argue, because it rained yesterday, therefore it should raine to day, then indeede hath it some aduantage to a grosse conceit. But if hee knowe an example onely enformes a coniectured likelihood, and so goe by reason, the *Poet* doth so farre exceed him, as hee is to frame his example to that which is most reasonable, be it in warlike, politike, or priuate matters, where the *Historian* in his bare, was, hath many times that which we call fortune, to ouerrule the best wisedome. Manie times he must tell euents, whereof he can yeeld no cause,



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cause, or if he do, it must be poetically. For that a fained example hath as much force to teach, as a true example (for as for to mooue, it is cleare, since the fained may be tuned to the highest key of passion) let vs take one example wherein an *Historian* and a *Poet* did concurre. *Herodotus* and *Iustin* doth both testifie, that *Zopirus*, King *Darius* faithfull seruant, seeing his maister long resisted by the rebellious *Babylonians*, fained himselfe in extreame disgrace of his King, for verifying of which, he caused his owne nose and eares to be cut off, and so flying to the *Babylonians* was receiued, and for his knowne valure so farre creadited, that hee did finde meanes to deliuer them over to *Darius*. Much like matter doth *Liuy* record of *Tarquinius*, and his sonne. *Xenophon* excellently faineth such an other Stratageme, performed by *Abra dates* in *Cyrus* behalfe. Now would I faine knowe, if occasion be presented vnto you, to serue yonr Prince by such an honest dissimulation, why you do not as well learne it of *Xenophons* fiction, as of the others veritie: and truly so much the better, as you shall saue your nose by the bargaine. For *Abra dates* did not counterfeyt so farre. So then the best of the *Historian* is subiect to the *Poet*, for whatsoever action or faction, whatsoever counsaile, pollicie, or warre, stratageme, the *Historian* is bounde to recite, that may the *Poet* if hee list with his imitation make his owne; bewrifying it both for further teaching, and more delighting as it please him: hauing all frō *Dante* his heuē to his hell, vnder the authority of his pen. Which if I be asked what *Poets* haue don for

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as I might wel name some, so yet say I, and say again,  
I speake of the Art and not of the Artificer. Now to  
that which commonly is attributed to the praise of  
Historie, in respect of the notable learning, is got by  
marking the successe, as though therein a man shuld  
see vertue exalted, & vice punished: truly that com-  
mendation is peculier to Poetrie, and farre off from  
Historie; for indeed Poetrie euer sets vertue so out  
in her best cullours, making fortune her well-way-  
ting handmayd, that one must needs be enamoured  
of her. Well may you see *Vlisses* in a storme and in  
other hard plights, but they are but exercises of pa-  
tience & magnanimitie, to make the shine the more  
in the neare following prosperitie. And of the con-  
trary part, if euill men come to the stage, they euer  
goe out (as the Tragedie writer answered to one  
that misliked the shew of such persons) so maniced  
as they litle animate folkes to follow them. But the  
Historie beeing captiued to the trueth of a foolish  
world, is many times a terror from well-doing, and  
an encouragement to vnbrideled wickednes. For  
see we not valiant *Milciades* rot in his fetters? The  
iust *Phacion* and the accomplished *Socrates*, put to  
death like Traytors? The cruell *Seuerus*, liue prof-  
perously? The excellent *Seuerus* miserably murthe-  
red? *Sylla* and *Marius* dying in their beds? *Pompey*  
and *Cicero* slain then when they wold haue thought  
exile a happinesse? See we not vertuous *Cato* drinen  
to kill himselfe, and Rebell *Cesar* so aduanced, that  
his name yet after 1600. yeares lasteth in the high-  
est honor? And marke but euen *Cesars* owne words  
of the forenamed *Sylla*, (who in that onely, did ho-  
nestly

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nestly to put downe his dishonest Tyrannie) *Litteras nesciuit*: as if want of learning caused him to doo well. He ment it not by Poetrie, which not content with earthly plagues, deuileth new punishments in hell for Tyrants: nor yet by Philosophy, which teacheth *Occidentos esse*, but no doubt by skill in History, for that indeed can affoord you *Cipsellus*, *Periander*, *Phalaris*, *Dionysius*, and I know not how many more of the same kinne, that speed well inough in their abhominable iniustice of vsurpation. I conclude therfore that he excelleth historie, not onely in furnishing the minde with knowledge, but in setting it forward to that which deserues to be called and accounted good: which setting forward and mouing to well doing, indeed setteth the Lawrell Crowne vpon the *Poets* as victorious, not onely of the *Historian*, but ouer the *Philosopher*, howloeu in teaching it may be questionable. For suppose it be granted, that which I suppose with great reason may be denied, that the *Philosopher* in respect of his methodical proceeding, teach more perfectly then the *Poet*, yet do I thinke, that no man is so much *philosophicus*, as to compare the *Philosopher* in mouing with the *Poet*. And that mouing is of a higher degree then teaching, it may by this appeare, that it is well nigh both the cause and effect of teaching. For who will be taught, if hee be not moued with desire to be taught? And what so much good doth that teaching bring forth, (I speake still of morall doctrine) as that it moueth one to do that which it doth teach. For as *Aristotle* saith, it is not *motus*, but *actus* must be the fruite: and how *actus* can be without being mo-



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ued to practise, it is no hard matter to consider. The *Philosopher* sheweth you the way, hee enformeth you of the particularities, as well of the tediousnes of the way, as of the pleasaunt lodging you shall haue when your journey is ended, as of the many by turnings that may diuert you from your way. But this is to no man but to him that will reade him, and reade him with attentiuē studious painfullnesse, which constant desire, whosoever hath in him, hath alreadie past halfe the hardnesse of the way: and therefore is beholding to the *Philosopher*, but for the other halfe. Nay truly learned men haue learnedly thought, that where once reason hath so much over-mastered passion, as that the minde hath a free desire to doo well, the inward light each minde hath in it selfe, is as good as a *Philosophers* booke, since in Nature we know it is well, to doo well, and what is well, and what is euill, although not in the wordes of Art which *Philosophers* bestow vppon vs: for out of naturall conceit the *Philosophers* drew it; but to be moued to doo that which wee know, or to be mooued with desire to know. *Hoc opus, hic labor est.* Now therein of all Sciences I speake still of humane (and according to the humane conceit) is our *Poet* the *Monarch*. For hee doth not onely shew the way, but giueth so sweete a prospect into the way, as will entice anie man to enter into it: Nay he doth as if your journey should lyethrough a faire vineyard, at the verie first, giue you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste, you may long to passe further. Hee beginneth not with obscure definitions,

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ons, which must blurre the margent with interpretations, and loade the memorie with doubtfullnesse: but hee commeth to you with words set in delightfull proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for the well enchanting skill of *Musicke*, and with a tale forsooth he commeth vnto you, with a tale, which holdeth children from play, and olde men from the Chimney corner; and pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the minde from wickednes to vertue; euen as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as haue a pleasaunt taste: which if one should begin to tell them the nature of the *Allges* or *Rhabarbarum* they should receiue, wold sooner take their phisick at their eares then at their mouth, so is it in men (most of which, are childish in the best things, til they be cradled in their graues) glad they will be to heare the tales of *Hercules*, *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, *Aeneas*, and hearing them, must needs heare the right description of wisdom, value, and iustice; which if they had bene barely (that is to say Philosophically) set out, they would sweare they be brought to schoole againe; that imitation whereof *Poetrie* is, hath the most conueniencie to nature of al other: insomuch that as *Aristotle* saith, those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battailes, vnnatural monsters, are made in poetickall imitation, delightfull. Truly I haue knowne men, that euen with reading *Amadis de gaule*, which God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect *Poesie*, haue found their hearts moued to the exercise of courtesie, liberalitie, and especially courage. Who readeth *Aeneas* carrying old *Anchises* on his backe, that wisheth not

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it were his fortune to performe so excellent an Act?  
Whom doth not those words of *Turnus* mooue,  
(the Tale of *Turnus* hauing planted his image in the  
imagination) *fugientem hac terra videbit? Vsq̃ue ad eone  
mori miserum est?* Whether the *Philosophers* as they think  
scorne to delight, so must they be content little to  
mooue; sauing wrangling whether *Virtus* be the  
chiefe or the onely good; whether the contempla-  
tiue or the actiue life do excell; which *Plato* & *Poe-  
tius* well knew: and therefore made mistresse *Philo-  
sophie* verie often borrow the masking raiment of  
*Poesie*. For euen those hard hearted euill men who  
thinke vertue a schoole name, and know no other  
good but *indulgere genio*, and therefore despise the  
austere admonitions of the *Philosopher*, and feele not  
the inward reason they stand vpon, yet will be con-  
tent to be delighted, which is all the good, fellow  
*Poet* seemes to promise; and so steale to see the form  
of goodnes, (which seene, they cannot but loue) ere  
themselues be aware, as if they tooke a medicine of  
Cheries. Infinit proofes of the straunge effects of  
this Poeticall inuention, might be alleaged: onely  
two shall serue, which are so often remembred, as  
I thinke all men know them. The one of *Menemus  
Agrippa*, who when the whole people of *Rome* had  
resolutely diuided themselues from the *Senate*, with  
apparant shew of vtter ruine, though he were for  
that time an excellent Orator, came not amōg them  
vpon trust either of figuratiue speeches, or cunning  
insinuations, and much lesse with farre fet *Maximes*  
of *Philosophie*, which especially if they were *Pla-  
tonike*, they must haue learned *Geometrie* before  
they



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they could well haue conceiued: but forsooth, he behaueth himselfe like a homely and familiar Poet. He telleth them a tale, that there was a time, when all the parts of the bodie made a mutinous conspiracie against the belly, which they thought deuoured the frutes of each others labour: they concluded they would set so vnprofitable a spender statute. In the end, to be short, for the tale is notorious, and as notorious that it was a tale, with punishing the belly they plagued themselves; this applied by him, wrought such effect in the people, as I neuer red, that onely words brought forth: but then so sūdaine and so good an alteration, for vpon reasonable conditions, a perfect reconciliation ensued. The other is of *Nathan* the Prophet, who when the holie *David*, had so farre forsaken God, as to confirme Adulterie with murder, when he was to do the tenderest office of a friend, in laying his owne shame before his eyes; sent by God to call againe so chosen a seruant, how doth he it? but by telling of a man whose beloued lambe was vngratefully taken from his bosome. The Application most diuinely true, but the discourse it selfe fained; which made *David* (I speake of the second and instrumentall cause) as in a glasse see his owne filthinesse, as that heauenly Psalm of mercie well testifieth. By these therefore examples and reasons, I thinke it may be manifest, that the *Poet* with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually then any other Art doth. And so a conclusion not vnfitly ensue, that as vertue is the most excellēt resting place for al worldly learning to make his end of, so *Poetry* being the

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most familiar to teach it, and most Princely to moue towards it, in the most excellent worke, is the most excellent workeman. But I am content not onely to decipher him by his workes (although workes in commendation and dispraise, must ever hold a high authoritie) but more narrowly will examine his parts, so that (as in a man) though altogether may carrie a presence full of maiestie and bewtie, perchance in some one defectuous peece we may finde blemish: Now in his parts, kindes, or *species*, as you list to tearme them, it is to be noted, that some *Poesies* haue coupled together two or three kindes, as the *Tragicall* and *Comicall*, whereupon is risen the *Tragicomicall*, some in the maner haue mingled prose and verse, as *Sanazara* and *Boetius*, some haue mingled matters *Heroicall* and *Pastorall*, but that commeth all to one in this question, for if seuered they be good, the coniunction cannot be hurtfull: therefore perchance forgetting some, and leauing some as needlesse to be remembered. It shall not bee amisse, in a word to cite the speciall kindes, to see what faults may be found in the right vse of them. Is it then the *Pastorall Poeme* which is misliked? (For perchance where the hedge is lowest they will soonest leape ouer) is the poore pipe disdained, which sometimes out of *Malibens* mouth, can shewe the miserie of people, vnder hard Lords and rauching souldiers? And again by *Titerus*, what blessednesse is deriued, to them that lie lowest, from the goodnesse of them that sit highest? Sometimes vnder the prettie tales of *Woolues* and *sheepe*, can conclude the whole considerations of wrong doing  
from  
and

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and patience; sometimes shew that contentions for trifles, can get but a trifling victory, wher perchance a man may see, that euen *Alexander & Darius*, when they strae who should be Cocke of this worldes dunghill, the benefit they got, was, that the afterliuers may say, *Hac memini & victum frustra contendere Thirsim. Ex illo Coridon, Coridon est tempore nobis.* Or is it the lamenting *Elegiack*, which in a kinde heart would mooue rather pittie then blame, who bewaileth with the great Philosopher *Heraclitus*, the weakenesse of mankinde, and the wretchednesse of the world: who surely is to bee praised either for compassionate accompanying iust causes of lamentations; or for rightlie painting out how weake be the passions of wofulnesse? Is it the bitter but wholesome *lambick*, who rubbes the galled minde, in making shame the Trumper of villanie, with bolde and open crying out against naughtinesse? Or the *Satirick*, who *Omne uisum vitium ridenti tangit amico*, who sportingly, neuer leaueth, till he make a man laugh at follie; and at length ashamed, to laugh at himself; which he cannot auoyde, without auoyding the follie? who while *Circum praeordia ludit*, giueth vs to feele how many headaches a passionate life bringeth vs to? How when all is done, *Est Vt lubricis animus si nos non deficit aquus*. No perchance it is the *Comick*, whom naughtie Play-makers and stage-keepers, haue iustly made odious. To the arguments of abuse, I will after answer, onely thus much now is to be said, that the *Comedy* is an imitatio of the cōmon errors of our life, which he representeth in the most ridiculous & scornfull



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scornfull sort that may be: so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one. Now as in *Geometrie*, the oblique must be knowne as well as the right, and in *Arithmetick*, the odde as well as the euen, so in the actions of our life, who seeth not the filthinesse of euill, wanteth a great foile to perceiue the bewtie of vertue. This doth the *Comædie* handle so in our priuate and domesticall matters, as with hearing it, wee get as it were an experience what is to be looked for of a niggardly *Demea*, of a craftie *Darius*, of a flattering *Gnato*, of a vain-glorious *Thraso*: and not onely to know what effects are to be expected, but to know who be such, by the signifying badge giuen them by the *Comædient*. And little reason hath any man to say, that men learne the euill by seeing it so set out, since as I said before, there is no man liuing, but by the force truth hath in nature, no sooner seeth these men play their parts, but wisheth them in *Pistrinum*, although perchance the sack of his owne faults lie so behinde his backe, that he seeth not himselfe to dance the same measure: wherto yet nothing can more open his eies, then to see his owne actions contemptibly set forth. So that the right vse of *Comædie*, will I thinke, by no bodie be blamed; and much lesse of the high and excellent *Tragedie*, that openeth the greatest woundes, and sheweth forth the *Ulcers* that are couered with *Tissue*, that maketh Kings feare to be Tyrants, and Tyrants manifest their tyrannicall humours, that with stirring the affects of *Admiration* and *Comiseration*, teacheth the vncertaintie of this world, and vpon how weak foundations gilden roofes are builded:

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that maketh vs know, *Qui scaptra seuus duro imperio regit, Timet timentes, metus in authorem redit.* But how much it can moue, *Plutarch* yeeldeth a notable testimonie of the abhominable Tyrant *Alexander Pheraus*, from whose eyes a *Tragedie* well made and represented, drew abundance of teares, who without all pittie had murdered infinite numbers, and some of his owne bloud: so as he that was not ashamed to make matters for *Tragedies*, yet could not resist the sweete violence of a *Tragedie*. And if it wrought no further good in him, it was, that he in despight of himself, withdrew himselfe from hearkening to that which might mollifie his hardened heart. But it is not the *Tragedie* they do mislike, for it were too absurd to cast our so excellent a representation of whatsoeuer is most woorthie to be learned. Is it the *Lyricke* that most displeaseth, who with histuned *Lyre* and well accorded voice, giueth praise, the reward of vertue, to vertuous acts? who giueth morall preceptes and naturall Problemes, who sometime raiseth vp his voyce to the height of the heauens, in singing the latides of the immortall God? Certainly I must confesse mine owne barbarousnesse, I neuer heard the old Song of *Percy* and *Duglas*, that I founde not my heart moued more then with a Trumpet; and yet is it sung but by some blinde Crowder, with no rougher voyce, then rude stile: which being so euill apparelled in the dust and Cobwebbes of that vnciuill age, what would it worke, trimmed in the gorgious eloquence of *Pindare*? In *Hungarie* I haue seene it the manner at all Feastes and o-

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ther such like meetings, to haue songs of their ancestors valure, which that right souldierlike nation, think one of the chiefeft kindlers of braue courage. The incomperable *Lacedemonians*, did not onelie carrie that kinde of *Musicke* euer with them to the field, but euen at home, as such songs were made, so were they all content to be singers of them: when the lustie men were to tell what they did, the old men what they had done, and the yoong what they would doo. And where a man may say that *Pindare* many times praiseth highly Victories of small moment, rather matters of sport then vertue, as it may be answered, it was the fault of the *Poet*, and not of the *Poetrie*; so indeed the chiefe fault was, in the time and custome of the *Greekes*, who set those toyes at so high a price, that *Phillip* of *Macedon* reckoned a horse-race wonne at *Olympus*, among his three fearefull felicities. But as the vnimitable *Pindare* often did, so is that kind most capable and most fit, to awake the thoughts from the sleepe of idlenesse, to embrace honourable enterprises. Their rests the *Heroicall*, whose verie name I thinke should daunt all backbiters. For by what conceit can a tongue bee directed to speake euil of that which draweth with him no lesse champions then *Achilles*, *Cirus*, *Aeneas*, *Turnus*, *Tideus*, *Rinaldo*, who doeth not onely teache and mooue to a truth, but teacheth and mooueth to the most high and excellent truth: who maketh magnanimitie and iustice, shine through all mistie fearefulnesse and foggie desires. Who if the say-  
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ing of *Plato* and *Tully* bee true, that who could see vertue, woulde bee woonderfullie rauished with the loue of her bewtie. This man setteth her out to make her more louely in her holliday apparrell, to the eye of anie that will daine, not to disdain vtill they vnderstand. But if any thing be alreadie said in the defence of sweete *Poetrie*, all concurrerth to the mainteining the *Heroicall*, which is not onelie a kinde, but the best and most accomplished kindes of *Poetrie*. For as the Image of each Action stirreth and instructeth the minde, so the loftie Image of such woorthies, moste enflameth the minde with desire to bee woorthie: and enformes with counsaile how to bee woorthie. Onely let *Aeneas* bee worne in the Tablet of your memorie, how hee gouerneth himselfe in the ruine of his Countrey, in the preserving his olde Father, and carrying away his religious Ceremonies, in obeying Gods Commaundment, to leaue *Dido*, though not onelie all passionate kindnesse, but even the humane consideration of vertuous gratefulnesse, would haue craued other of him: how in stormes, how in sports, how in warre, how in peace, how a fugitiue, how victorious, how besieged, how besieging, how to straungers, how to Allies, how to enemies, how to his owne. Lastly, how in his inward selfe, and howe in his outward gouernment, and I thinke in a minde moste preiudiced with a preiudicating humour, Hee will bee founde in excellencie fruitefull. Yea as *Horace*

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faith, *Melius Chrisippo & Grantore* : but truly I imagine it falleth out with these Poet-whippers, as with some good women who often are sicke, but in faith they cannot tel where. So the name of *Poetrie* is odious to them, but neither his cause nor effects, neither the summe that contains him, nor the particularities descending from him, giue any fast handle to their carping dispraise. Since then *Poetrie* is of all humane learnings the most ancient, and of most fatherly antiquitie, as from whence other learnings haue taken their beginnings; Since it is so vniuersall, that no learned nation doth despise it, nor barbarous nation is without it; Since both *Romane & Greeke* gaue such diuine names vnto it, the one of prophesying, the other of making; and that indeed that name of making is fit for him, considering, that where all other Arts retain themselves within their subiect, and receiue as it were their being from it. The *Poet* onely, onely bringeth his own stuffe, and doth not learn a Conceit out of a matter, but maketh matter for a Conceit. Since neither his description, nor end, containing any euill, the thing described cannot be euill; since his effects be so good as to teach goodnes, and delight the learners of it; since therein (namely in morall doctrine the chiefe of all knowledges) hee doth not onely farre passe the *Historian*, but for instructing is well nigh comparable to the *Philosopher*, for mouing, leaueth him behind him. Since the holy scripture (wherein there is no vncleannesse) hath whole parts in it Poeticall, and that euen our Sauior Christ vouchsafed to vse the flowers of it: since all his kindes are not onely in their vnited formes, but  
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the superficial part would promise. Marry these other pleasaunt fault-finders, who will correct the *Verbe*, before they vnderstand the *Nowne*, and confute others knowledge, before they confirme their owne, I would haue them onely remember, that scoffing commeth not of wisdom; so as the best title in true English they get with their meriments, is to be called good fooles: for so haue our graue forefathers euer tearmed that humorous kinde of iesters. But that which giueth greatest scope to their scorning humor, is ryming and versing. It is alreadie said (and as I thinke truly said) it is not ryming and versing that maketh *Poesie*: One may be a *Poet* without versing, and a versifier without *Poetrie*. But yet presuppose it were inseperable, as indeed it seemeth *Scalliger* iudgeth truly, it were an inseperable commendation. For if *Oratio*, next to *Ratio*, Speech next to Reason, be the greatest gift bestowed vpon *Mortalitie*, that cannot bee praiselesse, which doth most polish that blessing of speech; which considereth each word not onely as a man may say by his forcible qualitie, but by his best measured quantity: carrying euen in themselues a *Harmonie*, without perchance number, measure, order, proportion, be in our time growne odious. But laie aside the iust praise it hath, by being the onely fit speech for *Musicke*, (*Musicke* I say the most diuine striker of the senses) Thus much is vndoubtedly true, that if reading be foolish without remembring, Memorie being the onely treasure of knowledge, those words which are fittest for memory, are likewise most conuenient for knowledge. Now that Verse far exceedeth



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deth Prose, in the knitting vp of the memorie, the reason is manifest, the words (besides their delight, which hath a great affinitie to memorie) being so set as one cannot be lost, but the whole woorke failes: which accusing it selfe, calleth the remembrance back to it selfe, and so most strongly confirmeth it. Besides one word, so as it were begetting an other, as be it in rime or measured verse, by the former a mā shall haue a neare gesse to the follower. Lastly euen they that haue taught the Art of memory, haue shewed nothing so apt for it, as a certain roome diuided into many places, well & thoroughly knowne: Now that hath the verse in effect perfectly, euerie word hauing his natural seat, which seat must needs make the word remembred. But what needes more in a thing so knowne to all men. Who is it that euer was scholler, that doth not carry away som verses of *Virgil*, *Horace*, or *Cato*, which in his youth hee learned, and euē to his old age serue him for hourelly lessons; as *Percontatorem fugito nam garrulus idem est, Dum tibi quisq; placet credula turba sumas*. But the fitnes it hath for memorie, is notably prooued by all deliuerie of Arts, wherein for the most part, from *Grammer*, to *Logick*, *Mathematickes*, *Physick*, and the rest, the Rules chiefly necessaie to be borne away, are compiled in verses. So that verse being in it selfe sweet and orderly, and being best for memorie, the onely handle of knowledge, it must be in iest that any man can speak against it. Now then goe we to the most important imputation laid to the poore *Poets*, for ought I can yet learne, they are these. First, that there beeing manie other more frutefull knowledges, a man might

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might better spend his time in them, then in this. Secondly, that it is the mother of lyes. Thirdly, that it is the nurse of abuse, infecting vs with many pestilent desires, with a *Sirens* sweetnesse, drawing the minde to the Serpents taile of sinfull fantasies; and herein especially *Comedies* giue the largest field to eare, as *Chamcer* saith, how both in other nations and in ours, before *Poets* did soften vs, we were full of courage giuē to martial exercises, the pillers of manlike libertie, and not lulled a sleepe in shadie idlenes, with *Poets* pastimes. And lastly and chiefly, they cry out with open mouth as if they had ouer shot *Robin-hood*, that *Plato* banished them out of his Commonwealth. Truly this is much, if there be much truth in it. First to the first, That a man might better spend his time, is a reason indeed: but it doth as they say, but *petere principium*. For if it be, as I affirme, that no learning is so good, as that which teacheth and moueth to vertue, and that none can both teach and moue thereto so much as *Poesie*, then is the conclusion manifest; that incke and paper cannot be to a more profitable purpose imployed. And certainly though a man should graunt their first assumption, it should follow (mee thinks) very vnwillingly, that good is not good, because better is better. But I still and vtterly deny, that there is sprung out of earth a more fruitfull knowledge. To the second therefore, that they should be the principall lyers, I answer *Paradoxically*, but truly, I think truly: that of all writers vnder the Sunne, the *Poet* is the least lyer: and though he wold, as a *Poet* can scarcely be a lyer. The *Astronomer* with his cousin the *Geometrician*, can hardly

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hardly escape, when they take vpon them to measure the height of the starres. How often thinke you do the *Phisicians* lie, when they auerre things good for sicknesse, which afterwards send *Charon* a great number of soules drownd in a potion, before they come to his Ferrie? And no lesse of the rest, which take vpon them to affirme. Now for the *Poet*, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore neuer lieth: for as I take it, to lie, is to affirme that to bee true, which is false. So as the other *Artistes*, and especially the *Historian*, affirming manie things, can in the clowdie knowledge of mankinde, hardly escape from manie lies. But the *Poet* as I said before, neuer affirmeth, the *Poet* neuer maketh any Circles about your imagination, to coniure you to beleue for true, what he writeth: he citeth not authorities of other histories, but euē for his entrie, calleth the sweete *Muses* to inspire vnto him a good inuention. In troth, not laboring to tel you what is, or is not, but what should, or should not be. And therefore though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lieth not: without we will say, that *Nathan* lied in his speech before alleaged to *Dauid*, which as a wicked man durst scarce say, so thinke I none so simple, wold say, that *Esop* lied, in the tales of his beasts: for who thinketh that *Esop* wrote it for actually true, were wel worthie to haue his name Cromied among the beasts he writeth of. What childe is there, that coming to a play, and seeing *Thebes* written in great letters vpon an old doore, doth beleue that it is *Thebes*? If then a man can ascribe to the childe sage, to know that the *Poets* persons and doings, are but

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pictures, what should be, and not stories what haue bin, they will neuer giue the lie to things not Affirmatiuely, but Allegorically and figuratiuely written; and therefore as in historie looking for truth, they may go away full fraught with falshood: So in *Poesie*, looking but for fiction, they shall vse the narration but as an imaginative groundplat of a profitable inuention. But hereto is replied, that the *Poets* giue names to men they write of, which argueth a conceit of an actuall truth, and so not being true, prooueth a falshood. And dooth the *Lawier* lye, then when vnder the names of *John* of the *Stile*, and *John* of the *Nokes*, hee putteth his Case? But that is easily answered, their naming of men, is but to make their picture the more liuely, and not to build anie Historie. Painting men, they cannot leaue men namelesse: wee see, wee cannot plaie at Chestes, but that wee must giue names to our Chessemen; and yet mee thinkes he were a verie partiall Champion of truth, that would say wee lyed, for giuing a peece of wood the reuerende title of a Bishop. The *Poet* nameth *Cyrus* and *Alexander*, no other way, then to shewe what men of their fames, fortunes, and estates, should doo. Their third is, how much it abuseth mens wit, training it to wanton sinfulness, and lustfull one. For indeed that is the principall if not onely abuse, I can heare all eadgaw. They say the *Comedies* rather teach then reprehend amorous cōceits. They say the *Lirick* is larded with passionat *Sonets*, the *Elegiack* weeps the want of his mistress, and that euen to the *Heroical* *Scypid* hath ambitionfly climed.

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clined. Alas Loue, I would thou couldest as wel defend thy selfe, as thou canst offend others: I would those on whom thou doest attend, could either put thee away, or yeeld good reason why they keepe thee. But grant loue of bewtie to be a beastly fault, although it be verie hard, since onely man and no beast hath that gift to discerne bewtie, graunt that louely name of loue to deserue all hatefull reproches, although euen some of my maisters the *Philosophers* spent a good deale of their Lampoyle in setting forth the excellencie of it, graunt I say, what they will haue graunted, that not onelie loue, but lust, but vanitie, but if they list scurrilitie, possesse manie leaues of the *Poets* bookes, yet thinke I, when this is graunted, they will finde their sentence may with good manners put the last words foremost; and not say, that *Poetrie* abuseth mans wit, but that mans wit abuseth *Poetrie*. For I will not denie, but that mans wit may make *Poesie*, which should be *εὐκτα*, which some learned haue defined figuring forth good things to be *φωτιστικὴ* which doth contrariwise infect the fancie with vnwoorthie obiects, as the Painter should giue to the eye either some excellent perspectiue, or some fine Picture fit for building or fortification, or containing in it some notable example, as *Abraham* sacrificing his sonne *Isaack*, *Indith* killing *Holofernes*, *Dauid* fighting with *Goliath*, may leaue those, and please an ill pleased eye with wanton shewes of better hiddē matters. But what, shal the abuse of a thing, make the right vse odious? Nay truly though

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I yeeld, that *Poesie* may not onely be abused, but that being abused by the reason of his sweete charming force, it can do more hurt then anie other armie of words: yet shall it be so farre from concluding, that the abuse should giue reproach to the abused, that cōtrariwise, it is a good reason, that whatsoeuer being abused, doth most harme, being rightly vsed (and vpon the right vse, ech thing receiues his title) doth most good. Do we not see skill of Phisicke the best ramper to our often assaulted bodies, being abused, teach poyson the most violent destroyer? Doth not knowledge of Law, whose end is, to euen & right all things, being abused, grow the crooked fosterer of horrible iniuries? Doth not (to go to the highest) Gods word abused, breede heresie, and his name abused, become blasphemie? Truly a Needle cannot do much hurt, and as truly (with leaue of Ladies be it spoken) it cannot do much good. With a swoord thou maist kill thy Father, and with a swoord thou maist defende thy Prince and Countrey: so that, as in their calling *Poets*, fathers of lies, they said nothing, so in this their argument of abuse, they prooue the commendation. They alledge herewith, that before *Poets* began to be in price, our Nation had set their hearts delight vppon action, and not imagination, rather doing things worthie to be written, thē writing things fit to be done. What that beforetime was, I think scarcely *Spinx* can tell: since no memorie is so ancient, that hath not the precedens of *Poetrie*. And certain it is, that in our plainest homelines, yet neuer was the *Albion* Nation without *Poetrie*. Marry this Argument, though it beleuiled against *Poetrie*,



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*Poetrie*, yet is it indeed a chain-shot against all learning or bookishnes, as they commonly terme it. Of such mind were certaine *Gothes*, of whom it is written, that hauing in the spoile of a famous Cittie, taken a faire Librarie, one hangman belike fit to execute the frutes of their wits, who had murdered a great number of bodies, would haue set fire in it. No said an other verie grauely, take heed what you do, for while they are busie about those toyes, wee shall with more leisure conquere their Countries. This indeed is the ordinarie doctrine of ignorance, and many words sometimes I haue heard spent in it: but bicause this reason is generally against all learning, as wel as *Poetrie*, or rather all learning but *Poetrie*, because it were too large a digression to handle it, or at least too superfluous, since it is manifest that all gouernment of action is to be gotten by knowledge, and knowledge best, by gathering manie knowledges, which is reading; I onely with *Horace*, to him that is of that opinion, *Iubio stultum esse libenter*: for as for *Poetrie* it selfe, it is the freest from this obiection, for *Poetrie* is the Companion of Camps. I dare vndertake, *Orlando Furioso*, or honest king *Arthure*, will neuer displease a souldier: but the quidditie of *Ens & Prima materia*, will hardly agree with a Corcelet. And therefore as I said in the beginning, euen *Turkes* and *Tartars*, are delighted with *Poets*. *Homer* a *Creeke*, flourished, before *Greece* flourished: and if to a slight coniecture, a coniecture may bee apposed, truely it may seem, that as by him their learned mē tooke almost their first light of knowledge, so their actiue men, receiued their first motions of

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courage. Onely *Alexanders* example may serue, who by *Plutarche* is accounted of such vertue, that fortune was not his guide, but his footestoolle, whose Acts speake for him, though *Plutarche* did not: indeede the *Phanix* of warlike Princes. This *Alexander*, left his Schoolemaister liuing *Aristotle* behinde him, but tooke dead *Homer* with him. Hee put the Philosopher *Callisthenes* to death, for his seeming Philosophicall, indeed mutinous stubbornnesse, but the chiefe thing hee was euer heard to wish for, was, that *Homer* had bene aliue. Hee well founde hee receiued more brauerie of minde by the paterne of *Achilles*, then by hearing the definition of fortitude. And therefore if *Cato* misliked *Fuluius* for carrying *Ennius* with him to the field, It may be answered, that if *Cato* misliked it, the Noble *Fuluius* liked it, or else he had not done it; for it was not the excellent *Cato Vticensis*, whose authoritie I would much more haue reuerenced: But it was the former, intruth a bitter punisher of faultes, but else a man that had neuer sacrificed to the *Graces*. Hee misliked and cried out against all Greeke learning, and yet being foure score yeares olde beganne to learne it, be-like fearing that *Pluto* vnderstood not Latine. Indeed the *Romane* lawes allowed no person to bee carried to the warres, but hee that was in the soldiers Role. And therefore though *Cato* misliked his vnmustred person, he misliked not his worke. And if hee had, *Scipio Nasica* (iudged by common consent the best *Romane*) loued him: both the other *Scipio* brothers, who had by their vertues no lesse surnames

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surnames then of *Asia* and *Affricke*, so loued him, that they caused his bodie to be buried in their Sepulture. So as *Catoes* authoritie beeing but against his person, and that answered with so farre greater then himselfe, is herein of no validitie. But now indeede my burthen is great, that *Plato* his name is laide vppon mee, whom I must confesse of all *Philosophers*, I haue euer esteemed most worthe of reuerence; and with good reason, since of all *Philosophers* hee is the most *Poeticall*: yet if hee will defile the fountaine out of which his flowing streames haue proceeded, let vs boldly examine with what reasons hee did it. First truly a man might maliciously obiekt, that *Plato* being a *Philosopher*, was a naturall enemy of *Poets*. For indeede after the *Philosophers* had picked out of the sweete misteries of *Poetrie*, the right discerning true points of knowledge: they forthwith putting it in methode, and making a Schoole Art of that which the *Poets* did onely teach by a diuine delightfulness, beginning to spurne at their guides, like vngratefull Prentices, were not content to set vp shop for themselves, but sought by all meanes to discredit their maisters, which by the force of delight being barred them, the lesse they could overthrow them, the more they hated them. For indeed they found for *Homer*, seuen Cities straie who should haue him for their Citizen, where many Cities banished *Philosophers*, as not fit membets to liue among them. For onely repeating certaine of *Euripides* verses, many *Atheniens* had their liues saued of the *Siracans*; where the *Atheniens* themselves thought many



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many *Philosophers* vnworthie to liue. Certaine *Poets*, as *Simmides*, and *Pindarus*, had so preuailed with *Hiero* the first, that of a Tyrant they made him a iust King: where *Plato* could do so little with *Dionisius*, that he himselfe of a *Philosopher*, was made a slaue. But who should do thus, I confesse should requite the obiections made against *Poets*, with like cauil- lations against *Philosophers*: as likewise one should do, that should bid one read *Phadrus* or *Symposium* in *Plato*, or the discourse of loue in *Plutarch*, and see whether any *Poet* do authorise abhominable filthi- nesse as they doo. Againe, a man might aske, out of what Common-wealth *Plato* doth banish them, in sooth, thence where he himselfe alloweth commu- nitie of women. So as belike this banishment grew not for effeminate wantonnesse, since little should Poetical *Sonnets* be hurtful, when a man might haue what woman he listed. But I honor Philosophie all instructions, and blesse the wits which bred them: so as they be not abused, which is likewise stretched to *Poetrie*. *S. Paul* himselfe sets a watch-word vppon *Philosophie*, indeed vppon the abuse. So doth *Plato* vppon the abuse, not vpon *Poetrie*. *Plato* found fault that the *Poettes* of his time, filled the worlde with wrng opinions of the Gods, making light tales of that vnspotted essence; and therefore wold not haue the youth depraued with such opinions: heerein may much be said; let this suffice. The *Poets* did not induce such opinions, but did imitate those opini- ons already induced. For all the *Greeke* stories can well testifie, that the verie religiō of that time, stood vpon many, and many fashioned Gods: Not taught  
so

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so by *Poets*, but followed according to their nature of imitation. Who list may read in *Plutarch*, the discourses of *Iſis* and *Oſiris*, of the cause why Oracles ceased, of the diuine prouidence, & see whether the *Theology* of that nation, stood not vpon such dreams, which the *Poets* indeede superstitiously obserued, And truly since they had not the light of Christ, did much better in it, then the *Philosophers*, who shaking off superstition, brought in *Atheisme*. *Plato* therefore, whose authoritie, I had much rather iustly cōſtute, then vniuſtly reſiſt: ment not in generall of *Poets*, in those words of which *Iulius Scaliger* ſaith; *Qua auctoritate barbari quidam atq; hispidi abuti velint ad poetas è rep. Exigendos*. But only ment to driue out those wrong opinions of the Deitie: wherof now without further law, *Christianitie* hath taken away all the hurtful beliefe, perchance as he thought nourished by then esteemed *Poets*. And a man need go no further then to *Plato* himſelfe to knowe his meaning: who in his Dialogue called *Ion*, giueth high, and rightly, diuine commendation vnto *Poetrie*. So as *Plato* banishing the abuse, not the thing, not banishing it, but giuing due honour to it, ſhall be our Patron, and not our aduerſarie. For indeed, I had much rather, ſince truly I may do it, ſhew their miſtaking of *Plato*, vnder whose Lyons skinne, they would make an Aſlike braying againſt *Poesie*, then go about to ouerthrow his authoritie; whome the wiſer a man is, the more iuſt cauſe he ſhall finde to haue in admiration: eſpecially ſince he attributeth vnto *Poesie*, more then my ſelfe do; namely, to be a verie inspiring of a diuine force, farre aboue mans

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wit, as in the forenamed Dialogue is apparant. Of the other side, who would shew the honours haue bene by the best sort of iudgements graunted them, a whole sea of examples woulde present themselves; *Alexanders*, *Casars*, *Scipioes*, all fauourers of *Poets*: *Laelius*, called the *Romane Socrates* himselfe a *Poet*; so as part of *Heautontimoroumenon* in *Terence*, was supposed to bee made by him. And euen the Greeke *Socrates*, whome *Appollo* confirmed to bee the onely wise man, is said to haue spent part of his olde time in putting *Esopes* Fables into verses. And therefore full euill should it become his scholler *Plato*, to put such words in his maisters mouth against *Poets*. But what needs more? *Aristotle* writes the *Arte of Poesie*, and why, if it should not bee written? *Plutarche* teacheth the vse to bee gathered of them, and how, if they should not bee reade? And who reades *Plutarches* either *Historie* or *Philosophie*, shall finde hee trimmeth both their garments with gardes of *Poesie*. But I list not to defend *Poesie* with the helpe of his vnderling *Historiographie*. Let it suffice to haue shewed, it is a fit soyle for praise to dwell vpon; and what dispraise may set vpon it, is either easily overcome, or transformed into iust commendation. So that since the excellencies of it, may bee so easily and so iustly confirmed, and the lowe creeping obiections so soone trodden downe, it not beeing an Art of lyes, but of true doctrine; not of effoeminatenesse, but of notable stirring of courage; not of abusing mans wit, but of strengthening mans wit; not banished, but honored by *Plato*;  
Let



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Let vs rather plant more Lawrels for to ingarland  
the *Poets* heads (which honor of being Lawreate,  
as besides them onely triumphant Captaines were,  
is a sufficient authoritie to shewe the price they  
ought to bee held in) then suffer the ill sauoured  
breath of such wrong speakers once to blow vp-  
pon the cleare springs of *Poesie*. But since I haue  
runne so long a Carrier in this matter, methinkes  
before I giue my penne a full stoppe, it shall be  
but a litle more lost time, to enquire why England  
the Mother of excellent mindes should be growne  
so hard a stepmother to *Poets*; who certainly in  
wit ought to passe all others, since all onely pro-  
ceedes from their wit, beeing indeed makers of  
themselues, not takers of others. How can I but  
exclaime. *Musa mihi causas memoria quo numine*  
*laso*; Sweete *Poesie* that hath aunciently had Kings,  
Emperours, Senatours, great Captaines, such as  
besides a thousandes others, *Dauid*, *Adrian*, *So-*  
*phocles*, *Germanicus*, not onelie to fauour *Poets*, but  
to bee *Poets*: and of our nearer times, can present  
for her Patrons, a *Robert* King of *Scicill*, the great  
King *Fraunces* of *Fraunce*, King *James* of *Scotland*;  
such Cardinalls as *Bembus*, and *Bibiens*; suche fa-  
mous Preachers and Teachers, as *Beza* and *Me-*  
*lanchthon*; so learned *Philosophers*, as *Fracastor-*  
*ius*, and *Scaliger*; so great Orators, as *Pontanus*,  
and *Muretus*; so pearcing wits, as *George Bucha-*  
*nan*; so graue Counsaillours, as besides manie,  
but before all, that *Hospitall* of *Fraunce*; then  
whome I thinke that Realme neuer brought forth

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a more accomplished iudgement, more firmly build-  
ed vpon vertue: I say these with numbers of others,  
not onely to read others *Poesies*, but to *poetise* for o-  
thers reading; that *Poesie* thus embraced in all other  
places, should onely finde in our time a hard wel-  
come in England. I thinke the verie earth laments it,  
and therefore deckes our soyle with fewer Lawrels  
then it was accustomed. For heretofore, *Poets* haue  
in England also flourished: and which is to be no-  
ted, euen in those times when the Trumpet of *Mars*  
did sonnd lowdest. And now that an ouer faint qui-  
etnesse should seeme to strowe the house for *Poets*.  
They are almost in as good reputation, as the *Monn-  
tebanckes* at *Venice*. Truly euen that, as of the one side  
it giueth great praise to *Poesie*, which like *Venus* (but  
to better purpose) had rather be troubled in the net  
with *Mars*, then enioy the homely quiet of *Vulcan*.  
So serueth it for a peece of a reasō, why they are lesse  
gratefull to idle England, which now can scarce en-  
dure the paine of a penne. Vpon this necessarily fol-  
loweth, that base men with seruill wits vndertake it,  
who thinke it inough if they can be rewarded of the  
Printer: and so as *Epaminandas* is said with the honor  
of his vertue to haue made an Office, by his exerci-  
sing it, which before was contemptible, to become  
highly respected: so these men no more but setting  
their names to it, by their own disgracefulnesse, dis-  
grace the most gratefull *Poesie*. For now as if all the  
*Muses* were got with childe, to bring forth bastard  
Poets: without any commission, they do passe ouer  
the Bankes of *Helicon*, till they make the Readers  
more wearie then Post-horses: while in the meane  
time,

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time, they *Quis meliore luto finxit praecordia Titan*, are better content to suppress the out-flowings of their wit, then by publishing them, to be accounted Knights of the same order. But I that before ever I durst aspire vnto the dignitie, am admitted into the companie of the *Paper-blurrers*, do finde the verie true cause of our wanting estimation, is want of desert, taking vpon vs to be *Poets*, in despite of *Pallas*. Now wherein we want desert, were a thankwoorthie labour to expresse. But if I knew I should haue mended my selfe, but as I neuer desired the title, so haue I neglected the meanes to come by it; onely ouer-mastered by some thoughts, I yeelded an inckie tribute vnto them. Marrie they that delight in *Poesie* it selfe, should seek to know what they do, and how they do: and especially looke themselves in an vnflattering glasse of reason, if they be enclinable vnto it. For *Poesie* must not be drawne by the eares, it must be gently led, or rather it must lead, which was partly the cause that made the auncient learned affirme, it was a diuine gift & no humane skil; since all other knowledges lie readie for anie that haue strength of wit: A *Poet* no industrie can make, if his owne *Genius* be not carried into it. And therefore is an old Prouerbe, *Orator fit, Poeta nascitur*. Yet confesse I alwaies, that as the fertilest ground must be manured, so must the highest flying wit haue a *Dedalus* to guide him. That *Dedalus* they say both in this and in other, hath three wrings to beare it selfe vp into the aire of due commendation: that is Art, Imitation, and Exercise. But these neither Artifici-  
all Rules, nor imitative paternes, we much comber



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our selues withall. Exercise indeed we do, but that verie fore-backwardly; for where we should exercise to know, we exercise as hauing knowne: and so is our braine deliuered of much matter, which neuer was begotten by knowledge. For there being two principall parts, Matter to be expressed by words, and words to expresse the matter: In neither, wee vse Art or imitation rightly. Our matter is, *Quodlibet*, indeed though wrongly performing, *Onids* Verse. *Quicquid conabor dicere, Versus erit*; neuer marshalling it into anie assured ranck, that almost the Readers cannot tell where to finde themselves. *Chamier* vndoubtedly did excellently in his *Troilus* and *Creseid*: of whome trulie I knowe not whether to meruaile more, either that hee in that mistie time could see so clearly, or that wee in this cleare age, goe so stumblingly after him. Yet had hee great wants, fit to be forgiven in so reuerent an Antiquitie. I account the *Mirroure of Magistrates*, meetly furnished of bewtiful partes. And in the Earle of *Surreis* *Lirickes*, manie thinges tastig of a Noble birth, and worthie of a Noble minde. The *Shepheards Kalender*, hath much *Poetrie* in his *Egloges*, indeed woorthie the reading, if I be not deceined. That same framing of his style to an olde rusticke language, I dare not allow: since neither *Theocritus* in Greeke, *Virgill* in Latine, nor *Sanazara* in Italian, did affect it. Besides these, I doo not remember to haue seene but fewe (to speake boldly) printed, that haue poetickall sinnewes in them. For prooffe whereof, let but moste of the Verses be

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bee put in prose, and then aske the meaning, and it will bee founde, that one Verse did but beget an other, without ordering at the first, what should bee at the last, which becomes a confused masse of words, with a tingling sound of ryme, barely accompanied with reasons. Our Tragidies and Comedies, not without cause cryed out against, observing rules neither of honest civilitie, nor skillfull *Poesie*. Excepting *Gorboducke*, (againe I say of those that I have seen) which notwithstanding as it is full of stately speeches, and wel sounding phrases, clyming to the height of *Seneca* his style, and as full of notable morallitie, which it dooth most delightfully teach, and so obtaine the verie ende of *Poesie*. Yet in truth, it is verie defectionous in the circumstaunces, which greeues mee, because it might not remaine as an exact moddell of all Tragidies. For it is faultie both in place and time, the two necessarie Companions of all corporall actions. For where the Stage should alway represent but one place, and the vtermoste time presupposed in it, should bee both by *Aristotles* precept, and common reason, but one day; there is both manie dayes and places, inartificially imagined. But if it bee so in *Gorboducke*, howe much more in all the the rest, where you shall have *Asia* of the one side, and *Affricke* of the other, and so manie other vnder Kingdomes, that the Player when he comes in, must either begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceited. Now you shall have three Ladies walke together flowers,

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flowers, and then we must belecue the stage to be a garden. By and by we heare newes of shipwrack in the same place, then we are too blame if we accept it not for a Rock. Ypon the back of that, comes out a hidious monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a Caue: while in the meane time two Armies flie in, represented with foure swords & bucklers, and the what hard hart wil not receiue it for a pitched field. Now of time, they are much more liberall. For ordinarie it is, that two yoong Princes fall in loue, after many trauerses she is got with childe, deliuered of a faire boy: he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in loue, and is readie to get an other childe, and all this in two houres space: which howe absurd it is in sence, euen sence may imagine: and Arte hath taught, and all auncient examples iustified, and at this day the ordinarie players in *Italie* will not erre in. Yet will some bring in an example of *Eunuche* in *Terence*, that containeth matter of two dayes, yet far short of twentie yeares. True it is, and so was it to be played in two dayes, and so fitted to the time it set forth. And though *Plautus* haue in one place done amisse, let vs hit it with him, & not misse with him. But they will say, how then shall we set forth a storie, which contains both many places, and many times? And do they not know that a Tragicdie is tied to the lawes of *Poesie* and not of Historie: not bound to follow the storie, but hauing libertie either to faine a quite new matter, or to frame the Historie to the most Tragical conueniencie. Againe, many things may be told which cannot be shewed:

if



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if they know the difference betwixt reporting and representing. As for example, I may speake though I am here, of *Peru*, and in speech digresse from that, to the description of *Calecut*: But in action, I cannot represent it without *Pacolets Horse*. And so was the manner the Auncients tooke, by some *Nuntius*, to recount things done in former time or other place. Lastly, if they will represent an Historie, they must not (as *Horace* saith) beginne *ab ouo*, but they must come to the principall poynte of that one action which they will represent. By example this will be best expressed. I haue a storie of yoong *Polidorus*, deliuered for safeties sake with great riches, by his Father *Priamus*, to *Polminester* King of *Thrace*, in the *Trojan* warre time. He after some yeares, hearing the ouerthrowe of *Priamus*, for to make the treasure his owne, murthereth the Childe, the bodie of the Childe is taken vp, *Hecuba*, shee the same day, findeth a sleight to bee reuenged moste cruelly of the Tyrant. Where nowe would one of our Tragedie writers begin, but with the deliuerie of the Childe? Then should hee saile ouer into *Thrace*, and so spende I know not howe many yeares, and trauaile numbers of places. But where dooth *Euripides*? euen with the finding of the bodie, the rest leauing to be told by the spirite of *Polidorus*. This needes no further to bee enlarged, the dullest witte may conceiue it. But besides these grosse absurdities, howe all their Playes bee neither right Tragedies, nor right Comedies, mingling Kings and Clownes, not because the matter so carrieth it, but

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thrust in the Clowne by head and shoulders to play a part in maiesticall matters, with neither decency nor discretion: so as neither the admiration and Commiseration, nor the right sportfulnesse is by their mongrell Tragicomedie obtained. I know *Apuleius* did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment: and I knowe the Auncients haue one or two examples of Tragicomedies, as *Plautus* hath *Amphitrio*. But if we markethem well, wee shall finde that they neuer or verie daintily matche horne Pipes and Funeralls. So falleth it out, that hauing indeed no right Comedie in that Comicall part of our Tragidie, wee haue nothing but scurrillitie vnwoorthie of anie chaste eares, or some extreame shewe of doltishnesse, indeede fit to lift vp a loude laughter and nothing else: where the whole tract of a Comedie should be full of delight, as the Tragidie should bee still maintained in a well raised admiration. But our Comedients thinke there is no delight without laughter, which is verie wrong, for though laughter may come with delight, yet commeth it not of delight, as though delight should be the cause of laughter. But well may one thing breed both together, Nay rather in themselves, they haue as it were a kinde of contrarietie: For delight wee scarcely doo, but in thinges that haue a conueniencie to our selues, or to the generall nature: Laughter almost euer commeth of thinges moste disproportioned to our selues, and nature. De-  
light

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light hath a ioy in it either permanent or present. Laughter hath onely a scornfull tickling. For example, wee are rauished with delight to see a faire woman, and yet are farre from beeing moued to laughter. Wee laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainly wee cannot delight. We delight in good chaunces, wee laugh at mischaunces. We delight to heare the happinesse of our friendes and Countrey, at which hee were wor-thie to be laughed at, that would laugh: we shall contrarily laugh sometimes to finde a matter quite mistaken, and goe downe the hill against the byas, in the mouth of some such men as for the respect of them, one shall be hartily sorie, he cannot chuse but laugh, and so is rather pained, then delighted with laughter. Yet denie I not, but that they may goe well together, for as in *Alexanders* picture well set out, wee delight without laughter, and in twentie madde Antiques, wee laugh without delight. So in *Hercules*, painted with his great beard and furious countenance, in a womans attyre, spinning, at *Omphales* commaundement, it breedes both delight and laughter: for the representing of so straunge a power in Loue, procures delight, and the scornefulnesse of the action, stirreth laughter. But I speake to this purpose, that all the ende of the Comickall part, bee not vppon suche scornfull matters as stirre laughter onely, but mixe with it, that delightfull teaching, whiche is the ende of *Poesie*. And the great faulte euen in that poynt of laughter;



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and forbidden plainly by *Aristotle*, is, that they stirre laughter in sinfull things, which are rather execrable then ridiculous: or in miserable, which are rather to be pitied then scorned. For what is it to make folkes gape at a wretched begger, and a beggerly Clowne: or against lawe of hospitalitie, to leaſt at ſtraungers, becauſe they ſpeake not Engliſh ſo well as we do? What doo we learne, ſince it is certaine, *Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in ſe, Quam quod ridiculos homines facit*. But rather a buſie louing Cour- tier, and a hartleſſe threatning *Thraſo*; a ſelfe-wiſe ſeeming Schoolemaſter, a wry transformed Tra- ueller: theſe if we ſaw walke in Stage names, which we plaie naturally, therein were delightfull laugh- ter, and teaching delightfulneſſe; as in the other the Tragidies of *Buchanan* do iuſtly bring forth a diuine admiration. But I haue lauished out too many words of this Play-matter; I do it, becauſe as they are excelling parts of *Poeſie*, ſo is there none ſo much uſed in England, and none can be more pitti- fully abuſed: which like an vnmanerly daughter, ſhewing a bad education, cauſeth her mother *Poe- ſies* honeſtie to be called in queſtion. Other ſort of *Poetrie*, almoſt haue we none, but that *Lyricall* kind of Songs and Sonets; which Lord, if he gaue vs ſo good mindes, how well it might be employed, and with how heauenly fruites, both priuate and pub- like, in ſinging the praises of the immortal bewtie, the immortal goodnes of that God, who giueth vs hands to write, and wits to conceiue: of which we might wel want words, but neuer matter, of which we could turne our eyes to nothing, but we ſhould  
euer.

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euere haue new budding occasions. But truly many of such writings as come vnder the banner of vnresistable loue, if I were a mistresse, would neuer perswade mee they were in loue: so coldly they applye fire speeches, as men that had rather redde louers writings, and so caught vp certaine swelling Phrases, which hang together like a man that once tolde me the winde was at Northwest and by South, because he would be sure to name winds inough, then that in truth they feele those passions, which easily as I thinke, may be bewraied by that same forciblenesse or *Energia*, (as the Greeks call it of the writer). But let this be a sufficient, though short note, that we misse the right vse of the materiall point of *Poesie*. Now for the outside of it, which is words, or (as I may tearme it) *Diction*, it is euene well worse: so is it that hony-flowing Matrone *Eloquence*, apparrelled, or rather disguised, in a Courtisanlike painted affectation. One time with so farre fet words, that many seeme monsters, but must seeme straungers to anie poore Englishman: an other time with coursing of a letter, as if they were bound to follow the method of a Dictionary: an other time with figures and flowers, extreemly winter-starued. But I would this fault were onely peculiar to Versifiers, and had not as large possession among Prose-Printers: and which is to be meruailed among many Schollers, & which is to be pitied among some Preachers. Truly I could wish, if at least I might be so bold to wish, in a thing beyond the reach of my capacity, the diligent Imitators of *Tully* & *Demosthenes*, most worthie to be imitated, did not so much keepe *Nizolian* paper bookes,

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of their figures and phrases, as by attentive translation, as it were, deuoure them whole, and make them wholly theirs. For now they cast Sugar and spice vppon euerie dish that is serued to the table: like those *Indians*, not content to weare eare-rings at the fit and naturall place of the eares, but they will thrust Jewels through their nose and lippes, because they will be sure to be fine. *Tully* when he was to drine out *Catiline*, as it were with a thunderbolt of eloquence, often useth the figure of repetition, as *Vinit & vincit, imo insenatum, Venit imo, insenatum venit, &c.* Indee de enflamed, with a well grounded rage, hee would haue his words (as it were) double out of his mouth, and so do that artificially, which we see men in choller doo naturally. And we hauing noted the grace of those words, hale them in somerimes to a familiar Epistle, when it were too much choller to be chollericke. How well store of *Similiter Cadenses*, doth sound with the grauitie of the Pulpit, I woulde but inuoke *Demoſthenes* soule to tell: who with a rare daintinesse useth them. Truly they haue made mee thinke of the *Sophister*, that with too much subtiltie would proue two Egges three, and though he might bee counted a *Sophister*, had none for his labour. So these men bringing in such a kinde of eloquence, well may they obtaine an opinion of a seeming finenesse, but perswade few, which should be the ende of their finenesse. Now for similitudes in certain Printed discourses, I thinke all Herberists, all stories of beasts, foules, and fishes, are rifled vp, that they may come in multitudes to wait vpon any  
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of our conceits, which certainly is as absurd as surfer  
to the eares as is possible. For the force of a simili-  
tude not being to proue any thing to a contrary dis-  
puter, but onely to explaine to a willing hearer,  
when that is done, the rest is a most tedious prat-  
ling, rather ouerswaying the memorie from the  
purpose whereto they were applied, and anie  
whit enforming the iudgement alreadie either sa-  
tisfied, or by similitudes not to be satisfied. For  
my part, I doo not doubt, when *Antonius* and  
*Crassus*, the great forefathers of *Cicero* in eloquence,  
the one (as *Cicero* testifieth of them) pretended not  
to knowe Art, the other not to set by it, (because  
with a plaine sensiblenesse, they might winne cre-  
dit of popular eares, which credit, is the nearest  
steppe to perswasion, which perswasion, is the  
chiefe marke of Oratorie) I do not doubt I say, but  
that they vsed these knacks verie sparingly, which  
who doth generally vse, any man may see doth dance  
to his owne musick; and so to be noted by the audi-  
ence, more careful to speak curiously then truly. Vn-  
doubtedly (at least to my opinion vndoubtedly) I  
haue found in diuers smal learned Courtiers, a more  
sound stile, then in some professors of learning, of  
which I can gesse no other cause, but that the Cour-  
tier following that which by practise he findeth fit-  
test to nature, therein (though he know it not) doth  
according to art, though not by art: wherethe other  
vsing art to shew art and not hide art (as in these ca-  
ses he should do) flieth from nature, & indeed abuseth  
art. But what? methinks, I deserue to be poudd for  
straying from *Poetrie*, to *Oratory*: but both haue such

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an affinitie in the wordish consideration, that I think this digression will make my meaning receiue the fuller vnderstanding: which is not to take vpon me to teach *Poets* how they should do, but only finding my selfe sicke among the rest, to shew some one or two spots of the common infection growne among the most part of writers; that acknowledging our selues somewhat awry, wee may bende to the right vse both of matter and manner. Whereto our language giueth vs great occasion, being indeed capable of any excellent exercising of it. I knowe some will say it is a mingled language: And why not, so much the better, taking the best of both the other? Another will say, it wanteth Grammer. Nay truly it hath that praise that it wants not Grammer; for Grammer it might haue, but it needs it not, being so easie in it selfe, and so voyd of those combersome differences of *Cases, Genders, Moods, & Tenses*, which I thinke was a peece of the Tower of *Babilons* curse, that a man should be put to schoole to learn his mother tongue. But for the vitering sweetly and properly the conceit of the minde, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world. And is peticularly happy in compositions of two or three wordes together, neare the Greeke, farre beyond the Latine, which is one of the greatest bewties can be in a language. Now of versifying, there are two sorts, the one auncient, the other moderne. The auncient marked the quantitie of each sillable, and according to that, framed his verse: The moderne, obseruing onely number, with some regard of the accent; the chiefe life of it,  
standeth

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standeth in that like sounding of the words, which we call Rime. Whether of these be the more excellent, wold bear many speeches, the ancient no doubt more fit for Musick, both words and time obseruing quantitie, and more fit, liuely to expresse diuers passions by the low or loftie sound of the well-wayed sillable. The latter likewise with his rime striketh acertaine Musicke to the eare: and in fine, since it dooth delight, though by another way, it obtaineth the same purpose, there being in either sweetnesse, and wanting in neither, maiestie. Truly the English before any Vulgare language, I know is fit for both sorts: for, for the auncient, the *Italian* is so full of Vowels, that it must euer be combred with *Elisions*. The *Dutch* so of the other side with Consonants, that they cannot yeeld the sweete slyding, fit for a Verse. The *French* in his whole language, hath not one word that hath his accent in the last sillable, sauing two, called *Antepenultima*; and little more hath the *Spanish*, and therefore verie gracelessly may they vse *Dactyles*. The English is subiect to none of these defects. Now for Rime though we doo not obserue quantie, yet wee obserue the Accent verie precisely, which other languages either cannot do, or will not do so absolutely. That *Cesura*, or breathing place in the midst of the Verse, neither *Italian* nor *Spanish* haue: the *French* and we, neuer almost faile off. Lastly, euen the verie Rime it selfe, the *Italian* cannot put it in the last sillable, by the *French* named the *Masculine* Rime; but still in the next to the last, which the *French* call the *Female*; or the next before that, which the *Italian* *Sdrucchiola*: the example



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Of the former, is *Buono, Suono*, of the *Sdrucchiola*, is *Femina, Semina*. The French of the other side, hath both the Male as *Bôn, Son*; and the Female, as *Plaise, Taise*; but the *Sdrucchiola* he hath not: where the English hath all three, as *Du, Trew, Father, Rather, Motion, Potion*, with much more which might be sayd, but that already I finde the triflings of this discourse is much too much enlarged. So that since the ever-praise woorthie *Poesie* is full of vertue breeding delightfulnesse, and voyd of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning, since the blames layd against it, are either false or feeble, since the cause why it is not esteemed in England, is the fault of Poet-apes, not *Poets*. Since lastly our tongue is most fit to honour *Poesie*, and to bee honoured by *Poesie*, I coniure you all that haue had the euill luck to read this inck-wasting toy of mine, euen in the name of the nine *Muses*, no more to scorne the sacred mysteries of *Poesie*. No more to laugh at the name of *Poets*, as though they were next inheritors to fooles; no more to iest at the reuerent title of a Rimer, but to belecue with *Aristotle*, that they were the auncient Treasurers of the Grecians diuinitie; to belecue with *Bembus*, that they were first bringers in of all *Ciuilitie*; to belecue with *Scalliger* that no *Philosophers* precepts can sooner make you an honest man, then the reading of *Virgil*; to beleue with *Clauserius*, the Translator of *Cornutus*, that it pleased the heauenly deitie by *Hesiod* and *Homer*, vnder the vaile of Fables to giue vs all knowledge, *Logicke, Rhetoricke, Philosophie*, naturall and morall, and *Quid non?* To beleue with me, that there are many misteries contained.

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contained in *Poetrie*, which of purpose were written darkly, least by prophane wits it should be abused: To beleene with *Landin*, that they are so beloved of the Gods, that whatsoever they write, proceeds of a diuine furie. Lastly, to beleene themselves when they tell you they will make you immortal by their verses. Thus doing, your name shall flourish in the Printers shops. Thus doing you shalbe of kin to many a Poeticall Preface. Thus doing, you shal be most faire, most rich, most wise, most all: you shall dwell vpon Superlatiues. Thus doing, though you be *Libertino patre natus*, you shall sodeinly grow *Herculea proles*. *Si quid mea Carmina possunt*. Thus doing, your soule shall be placed with *Dantes Beatrix*, or *Virgils Anchises*. But if (fie of such a but) you bee borne so neare the dull-making *Cataract* of *Nilus*, that you cannot heare the Planet-like Musicke of *Poetrie*; if you haue so earth-creeping a mind that it cannot lift it selfe vp to looke to the skie of *Poetrie*, or rather by a certaine rusticall disdain, wil become such a mome, as to bee a *Momus* of *Poetrie*: then though I will not wish vnto you the Asses eares of *Midas*, nor to be driuen by a *Poets* verses as *Bubonax* was, to hang himselfe, nor to be rimed to death as is said to be done in *Ireland*, yet thus much Curse I must send you in the behalfe of all *Poets*, that while you liue, you liue in loue, and neuer get fauour,  
for lacking skill of a Sonet, and when you  
die, your memorie die from the earth  
for want of an Epitaphe.

FINIS.